



GLENGARRIFF 9

AS A

WINTER HEALTH-RESORT.

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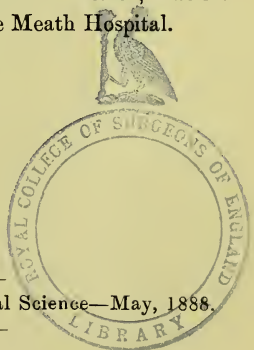
DR. MAC DOWEL COSGRAVE.

DR. MONTGOMERY.

DR. J. J. MURPHY.

MR. GEORGE CLARKE.

Reprinted from the Dublin Journal of Medical Science—May, 1888.

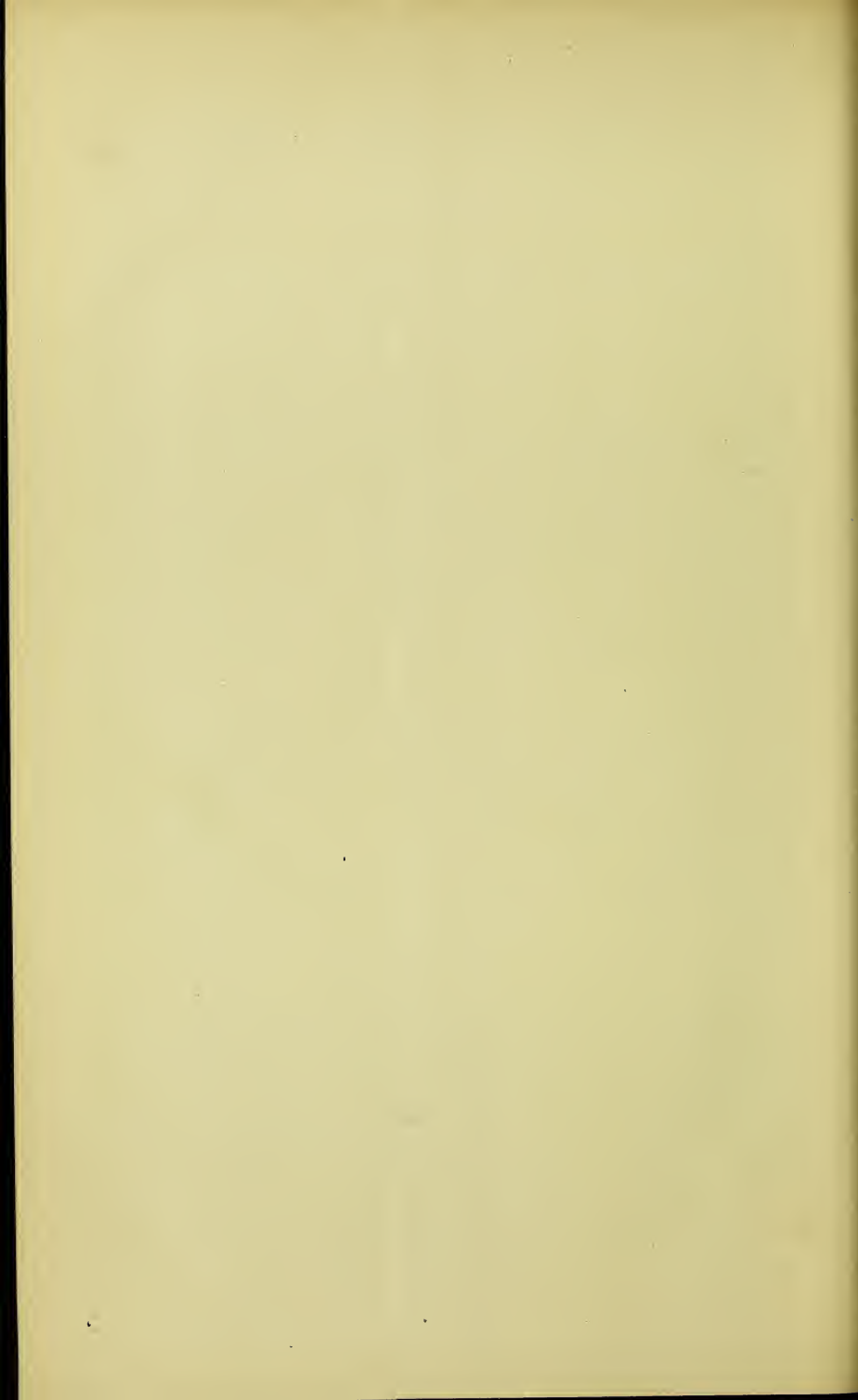


DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

BY JOHN FALCONER, 53 UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET.

1888.





GLENGARRIFF AS A WINTER HEALTH-RESORT.*

THIS charming health-resort, so naturally well situated on the shores of Bantry Bay, has of late years become much more easy of access than hitherto. Yet how many there are who seem to be unaware of its existence, and of the climatic advantages which it offers. Glengarriff is one of the bright sunny spots in this island, where nature has been most lavish in bestowing her choicest gifts. To speak of its scenic attractions is to divert attention from the point upon which it lays claim (and that a strong claim too) to the notice of the health-seeker and the invalid.

Glengarriff supplies a want long felt in Ireland, where the sufferer recovering from a long tedious illness may find a climate mild, equable, and yet invigorating—a climate similar and in many respects preferable to that of Torquay, Bournemouth, or the Isle of Wight, a locality now more easily arrived at, and completely sheltered from the east, north, and north-west winds. The climatic conditions of Glengarriff have been considered in many respects similar to those of Pau in the south of France, with the difference that the air at the former is more bracing, and not so relaxing, as that experienced at the French health-resort. One incontestable and striking proof of the mildness of the climate is the abundant and forward character of its vegetation; tender fruit trees, which in other parts of Ireland are carefully nursed under cover during winter, here thrive without any protection. Grapes ripen in the open, and on every side are to be met the rarest and most delicate ferns and flowering shrubs of all kinds, rarely seen outside of a conservatory in these countries. The same may be said of table produce; the potato (that favourite vegetable of the million in Ireland) planted early in February is ready for use in May. This fact alone, the luxuriant growth of the vegetable world at Glengarriff, is a very striking illustration of the exceptional mildness

* Read before the Section of State Medicine in the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, Friday, April 6, 1888.

of the climate, and silently, though impressively and eloquently, conveys more than the most graphic description that could be given of this health-restoring and charming district. Goldsmith's lines—

“ Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering bloom delayed,”

may aptly be applied to Glengarriff.

Glengarriff is protected from the northerly and easterly winds by the Caha range of mountains, from the westerly winds by a spur of this same range, the “ Sugar Loaf,” the highest mountain, being about 1,900 feet above the level of the sea—in fact, the balmy south wind is the only one that has any power at Glengarriff, and that comes to it tempered by the benign influence of the Gulf Stream. The biting easterly winds that are experienced in the early spring at other health-resorts on the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland are utterly unknown here, and the invalid in the months of February and March can with safety avail himself of the boon of outdoor exercise, the air being genial and warm. In the early spring of the present year (February), when the writer visited Glengarriff, the thermometer in the open at midday in the sun registered as high as 76°, and in the decline of the afternoon never went below 58°, and so mild was the climate in the evenings that persons were enabled to sit in the open air without feeling any discomfort or chilliness; we were experiencing May weather.

Leaving Dublin (Kingsbridge) at nine o'clock any morning, one can arrive at Glengarriff at seven o'clock, or a little after, in the evening. The drive from Bantry to Glengarriff is very picturesque and beautiful, the road skirting the borders of the Bay for nearly all the distance. During the winter and spring months, the hotels will send, on being apprised, most comfortable and well-appointed closed carriages, and during the summer season there is a regular service of coaches running through from Bantry to Glengarriff, Kenmare and Killarney. Some years ago the journey to Glengarriff was looked upon as well-nigh an impossible task, but now it is most easy of access, and it seems very probable that within the next few years it will be placed in direct railway communication with all parts of Ireland. The hour and a half's drive, or thereabouts, from Bantry to Glengarriff, will be found by the invalid to be undoubtedly the most tedious part of the journey, but to such persons it would be advisable to rest in Cork one night, and go on to Bantry and Glengarriff next morning; the rest will be of service,

and the drive on the following day along the sheltered shores of Bantry Bay will be most delightful and exhilarating.

Since Glengarriff has now become more easy of access, has such good hotel accommodation, and can offer unusual climatic advantages, it becomes a matter for earnest consideration whether we are justified in recommending patients (more especially those suffering from pulmonary affections) to places removed by long distances from their homesteads. It is doubtful whether the invalid is compensated for the loss of home associations and kindred comforts entailed by a long journey to the Continent. Here we have a district surrounded on all sides by high chains of mountains, and protected from all the cold and biting winds, open only to the balmy wind from the south, with an annual mean temperature of 52° , a winter mean temperature of 46° , an unusual amount of sunshine, a mild and equable climate, as evidenced by the luxurious character of the vegetable world, and hotel accommodation of the best class—in fine, a Madeira in Ireland. It is surely well worth our while to turn our earnest attention to the advantages so manifestly derivable from a health-resort so near home, and possessing so many natural advantages.

There can be no question of the suitability of Glengarriff as a residence for invalids in the winter and spring time of the year; its unusually mild and equable climate renders it a most desirable residence for sufferers from bronchial affections, consumptive and asthmatic patients specially deriving great benefit and relief from a sojourn there. Rheumatic and gouty patients requiring a high temperature and a minimum of variability of weather will derive considerable relief during the winter months from a visit to Glengarriff. To the latter class of sufferers the climate offers very many advantages; to the consumptive invalid, the sun heat in the winter and spring time of the year permitting on most days open-air exercise, is invaluable; in the majority of such cases the advent to Glengarriff is marked by an increased appetite, a disappearance of night perspiration and fever, and an improvement in the whole constitution; and I do not hesitate to say that in cases of consumption, or where there is a tendency to that disease, the climate and sheltered situation of Glengarriff have very marked and unrivalled advantages, surrounded as it is on the north, east, and west by lofty ranges of mountains, and thus protected from the harsh and biting east and north winds. The absence of foggy weather is also remarkable, and to the bronchial

sufferer this is most important, as the baneful effects of fogs on pulmonary diseases are well known. It is a remarkable coincidence that comparatively few cases of phthisis and other affections of the chest and throat occur at Glengarriff and the surrounding districts.

Dr. Blennerhasset stated some years ago that in his dispensary practice he had only one consumptive case in 2,000, and out of 163,000 patients the number who laboured under phthisical disease was 85; he added that this malady was still rarer among the gentry, and that the progress of the disease was slower than was usual elsewhere. The late Dr. Alfred Hudson, of Dublin, Physician to the Queen in Ireland, bore testimony to the superior claims of Glengarriff as a winter and spring health-resort as follows:—"I first became acquainted with Glengarriff many years ago, when suffering from an obstinate laryngeal cough, which, however, rapidly yielded to the influences of its mild climate; since then I have induced many invalids to resort to it, and with, I may say, decided advantage in every instance."

The late Dr. Hayden, Vice-President of the King and Queen's College of Physicians, Ireland, whose accurate information about disease and observant mind are well remembered, referring to Glengarriff, says:—"Few wants are more sensibly felt in Ireland than that of a suitable health-resort, to which, without submitting to the pain and inconvenience of leaving their own country, those suffering from chronic or recurrent affections of the respiratory organs may have recourse during the winter and early spring months.

"A locality easy of access, sheltered from the east, the north, and north-west winds, presenting fine natural scenery under its most attractive form of mountain, wood, and water combined in due proportion, enjoying a warm, equable, pure and dry air, and affording, at a moderate expense, all the advantages of a comfortable home, with adequate provision for active exercise out of doors, free from the ordinary dangers of exposure, would supply the requisites of an establishment such as I contemplate.

"Glengarriff has been highly favoured by nature, and possesses, in a pre-eminent degree, the conditions essential to a site for a winter residence."

Dr. Gilbert Smith, Physician to the Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, London, thus speaks of Glengarriff as a winter health-resort. As will be noticed, he refers personally to the benefits he himself received here:—"I know many who have gained consider-

able advantage there, but I can from personal experience bear my testimony, as some years ago, when in a state bordering on consumption, I derived very great benefit from a two months' happy sojourn at the Eccles Hotel.

“To that class of diseases of the chest which requires a winter residence in a warm and moist atmosphere, the climate of Glengarriff presents unrivalled qualifications.”

Referring to the comparatively few number of cases of consumption at Glengarriff and the district surrounding it, it is worthy of note that in an interesting paper read by the Registrar-General for Ireland at the Royal Academy of Medicine in May, 1887, it was shown that there were two principal centres of excess of consumption on the eastern side of Ireland—namely, Belfast and Dublin—and the two principal centres of low prevalence on the western side were Mayo and Kerry; the rate of mortality from consumption in the Kenmare Union being as low as 9·2, and in the Bantry Union (in which Glengarriff is situated) only 11·8 per 10,000 of the mean population. It was furthermore noticed that where the rainfall was greatest the mortality from consumption was least, and that where the differences in temperature were greatest there it prevailed the most. The average annual death-rate from diseases of the respiratory organs during the years 1871 to 1880 in the Bantry Union was 23·8 per 10,000 of the population, and the death-rate from all causes during the year 1887 in the Glengarriff district was only 11·0 per 1,000—a low death rate.

It is generally accepted that the climate of any particular district is mainly regulated by the influence of the wind, and is furthermore influenced by its height above sea level. If the locality is sheltered from cold winds by ranges of mountains or extensive woods, and at the same time is open to winds blowing from a warm point, and has a southern aspect, it possesses all the advantages and conditions of a winter health-resort. Glengarriff possesses these favourable conditions in an eminent degree.

In noticing the climate of Glengarriff, mention has been made of the forward character of the vegetation. Frequently the observations founded on the thermometer are open in many ways to error, and from a variety of circumstances may deceive the most careful observer. It is not so with the vegetable world. It cannot so easily deceive; temperature is simply a matter of life and death to the world of plants, shrubs, flowers, &c., and they reveal much more than mere temperature, for they derive their very existence

and luxuriance from moisture or dryness, from wind or calm, and from the character of the soil from which they take their growth. A continued and careful observation made for some years by a reliable local observer of the trees, flowers, shrubs, and fruit, and their forward growth in the early spring months of February and March, afford a strong and an undeniable proof of the mildness and equability of the climate at Glengarriff.

It is much to be regretted that no regular and continued meteorological observations have been taken at Glengarriff; the nearest meteorological station is Valencia, which is about thirty miles distant and to the north-west. The mean annual temperature at Valencia for the years 1885, 1886, and 1887 was 51.1° ; and from a series of observations made some three years ago the mean annual temperature at Glengarriff was 52.0° , which is higher than the mean annual temperature of Torquay— 51.1° ; Ventnor, 51.9° ; and Bournemouth, 51.2° . The average annual rainfall is between 40 and 45 inches.

The harbour at Glengarriff is probably one of the most picturesque sheets of water to be met with in the South of Ireland. It is studded over with an innumerable number of verdure-clad islets, each one presenting peculiar beauties of its own. Chief amongst the number is the island of Garinish, surmounted by a fort and martello tower. Possibly the finest view of the bay and harbour is that from a hill on the Bantry side of Roche's Royal Hotel, from the summit of which a splendid view is obtained of the numerous islets, some thirty in number, the Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff Church, a large portion of Bantry Bay, the fine range of hills lying between Bantry Bay and Dunmanus Bay, including Mount Gabriel, the whole range of the Caha mountains, &c. Another equally fine view is that from the pleasure grounds in the rear of the Eccles Hotel. This affords a somewhat different aspect, equally as picturesque as the preceding. Within the grounds of Roche's Hotel are some charming walks, sheltered, and leading down to the water's edge, presenting here and there the most fanciful and picturesque views. There are prettily-situated waterfalls in the midst of a dense wood, the upper one, the smaller of the two, being crossed by a rustic bridge, which adds considerably to the beauty of the scene.

Glengarriff has two hotels, both exceedingly well managed and very comfortable. It is no exaggeration to say that it would be difficult to find their equal in the kingdom. They are both most

beautifully situated, and possess every modern convenience that the most fastidious traveller can desire. During the early spring months the Eccles Hotel, being situated in the valley and surrounded on all sides by hills, is perhaps the most suitable for the invalid; its sheltered position is more particularly an advantage to the bronchial sufferer at this season of the year.

Roche's Royal Hotel, charmingly situated within its own grounds and standing on an eminence, has the advantage as a residence at the other seasons of the year; its elevated though well-protected position renders it more bracing and invigorating, and not so relaxing; besides, it commands some of the finest views of the scenery around Glengarriff. At both hotels boarders are taken at a moderate tariff during the winter and spring months.

The absence of a resident medical man was up to the present time rather a hindrance to the recommendation of invalids to Glengarriff, but the guardians of the Bantry Union are now erecting a house for a doctor in the most central situation, so that in the future medical assistance will be near at hand.

There is a very good service of trains between Cork and Bantry, but the need of a direct communication at Cork between the two railway termini is very apparent. If this connection were made, it would be of very great advantage, and a decided boon to the travelling public.

Dr. Adderley, the local medical officer, informs me that the mortality from diseases of the chest is very small, and that cases of phthisis are very rare. Twenty-four of the thirty-two deaths registered during the year 1887 averaged seventy-nine years, and diseases of an epidemic character were altogether absent.

Glengarriff possesses in a superlative degree all the conditions essential to a health-resort of the first order, and, as a winter and spring residence, it has very few equals (if any) in these countries. Well might Thackeray exclaim—"What sends picturesque tourists to the Rhine and Saxon Switzerland, when at Glengarriff there is a country the magnificence of which no pen can give an idea? Were such a bay lying upon English shores, it would be a world's wonder."

The PRESIDENT of the College of Physicians (Dr. James Little) said they were all too prone to think that far away fields were green. From personal observation, having sojourned in Glengarriff on two occasions, he expressed his entire concurrence with Mr. Flinn's opinion as

expressed in his paper. He stayed at Eccles Hotel, in the Valley, as better than the other hotel, which, though an exceedingly good one, was in a lofty situation. Dr. Hudson was in the habit of sending his bronchitic and rheumatic sufferers there during the spring months—March, April, and the early part of May—as the season when Glengarriff was particularly useful. Glengarriff compared very favourably, as far as climate and hotel accommodation were concerned, with the English seaside health-resorts, including Torquay, Bournemouth and Ventnor. But, of course, people's minds had to be considered to a certain extent as well as their bodies, and though there were some who would be perfectly satisfied with picturesque scenery and pleasant walks, others felt their spirits better when in the region of gas-lamps and shop-fronts. To such people Torquay and Ventnor were more attractive than Glengarriff, as there was a great deal more done in those places in promoting amusement. From the statements of patients as regards the weather, he considered the weather at Glengarriff would compare favourably with that at any of those English watering places. Indeed he thought, making a contrast with Continental resorts also, that Glengarriff lacked the coldness, dampness, gloom, and rain which prevailed during a great part of the year at Pau.

SIR CHARLES CAMERON considered the worst feature of Glengarriff from a health point of view was the excessive rain-fall, between 40 and 50 inches in the year. The value of the paper would be enhanced by a chart showing, by means of a curve or otherwise, the distribution of rain throughout the year, in order to determine the time of the year when the rainfall was smallest. The discomfort of Buxton was the frequent rainfall; but it was nothing to that which prevailed at Glengarriff, if the return given was authentic. It would be of great value that the meteorological statistics should be accurately known, giving the average number of rainy days, the mean temperature and the extremes each month. Mr. Flinn's paper recalled a communication made by Dr. Blennerhassett, as to the immunity of the natives of Dingle, County Kerry, from phthisis. As regards grapes growing in the open air, he knew it was possible to grow grapes in the Arctic regions; but even in the Channel Islands the grapes produced were fit only for vinegar, and therefore he asked whether it was a fact that grapes which could be eaten grew in the open air at Glengarriff.

DR. JOHN WILLIAM MOORE regretted that there was no meteorological station at Glengarriff, and until there was such a station the place would never be known outside Ireland. It was by the establishment of climatological stations that certain places in the South of England came to be known and frequented. The nearest stations

to Glengarriff were those at Killarney and Valencia. It appeared that the bulk of the rainfall descended in the late summer, throughout the autumn, and in the early winter. Therefore, at the season when Glengarriff was most needed as a health-resort—namely, spring—the climate must be simply delightful. There was a moderate rainfall, the sky was clear, and the wind, though easterly, was deprived of all its harshness by passing over a considerable extent of water surface. He had no doubt that during the past two months the climate of Glengarriff had been perfection. The value of a thermometer exposed in front of the hotel went for very little. Careful observations should be made on the wet bulb thermometer as well as on the dry. The desirability of establishing a station at Glengarriff should be brought under the notice of the Meteorological Council of the Royal Society, and somebody in the neighbourhood ought to be induced to take the observations. Indeed, what was called an observatory of the second order could be fitted up at a cost of £10, and some member of Mr. Eccles' family might soon be taught to read the instruments with sufficient accuracy.

DR. COSGRAVE emphasised the fact of the great mildness of the climate of Glengarriff in spring. A patient of his, who had been for the last four weeks at Glengarriff, had written to him, stating he had been out from morning till night during the whole period without feeling the slightest inconvenience, though when he left Dublin the apex of one lung was affected, and he had great difficulty in breathing. In addition to the advantage of having such a desirable climate within easy reach of Dublin, there was also the advantage that Glengarriff was an exceedingly cheap place—the hotels charging only from £2 to £2 10s. per week for bed and board. He concurred in the importance of establishing a meteorological station there.

The PRESIDENT remarked that it was also an important fact in favour of Glengarriff that no such violent and sudden changes of weather from heat to cold occurred there as in Southern Europe along the Mediterranean shore.

MR. R. MONTGOMERY said Dr. Hudson had been in the habit of advising his patients to go to Glengarriff, but a great drawback was the difficulty of access to it and the want of amusements to supplement the picturesque scenery and balmy air. In the English health-resorts there were bands and other entertainments which drew the people from thinking of themselves, or regarding the place as a recovery hospital.

MR. GEO. CLARKE who had been there two years, said that the rain dried up with remarkable rapidity.

MR. J. J. MURPHY said one patient had complained of the rain and another of the fogs.

MR. FLINN, in reply, said he had called the attention of the proprietors of the two hotels at Glengarriff to the necessity of having a regular system of meteorological observations, and they said they had applied for it five or six years ago. The rainfall at Torquay was 40 inches in the year, which came very near to that at Glengarriff. Wherever there was beautiful scenery, mountainous especially, there was sure to be an excessive rainfall. The climate was so mild in February at Glengarriff that he sat in the evenings outside the hotel without feeling any discomfort. Some of the visitors happened to be English invalids ordered there by English medical men.

